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have discovered childhood and to unfold its wondrous revelations. No man nor woman who has passed through The Struggle can read the lullabies and the child-songs of Eugene Field and not realize that he kindles afresh the spark of child-life, and gives it an eternal glow of gentleness, of tenderness, and of love.

He was a Homer to the children. He revelled in their pleasures. His tender strains in praise of childhood were but the outbursts of his own boyish heart. He himself was a boy, and all men and women who called him friend were his boy and girl friends and whilom playmates. He once said:

"I like boy life. I like the buoyancy of youth and its freshness; the pleasures of life that come to a boy in the country. It is a God's pity every young child cannot get a taste of country life at some time."

He always lived in the closest and fondest intimacy with the children, and was thus enabled to voice childish sentiment and feeling. It is true—and in accordance with his own confession—he did not love *all* children. He tried to analyze his feelings with respect to them, and he loved them personally only in so far as he could make pets of them. And few there were, whether they came to him in silks or in cottons,

who were not his pets. In his home life he called about him children of all ages and all conditions. He loved to have it so, and with them and among them he easily made himself a child again, and joined them in their games. He loved th things that children love. He once v te: "I believe in ghosts, in witches, and in fairies, and I adore dolls." It is known that during his lifetime he bought hundreds of dolls, and once, when making generous purchases at a toy shop, he made excuses thus: "Oh, when little girls come to see me I can give them a dolly to take home." That illustrates his character better than the words of others. He

was kind-hearted to a fault, and his sympathy was broad and deep. Entering a strange household, it seemed only natural for him to move about and seek the children, and the youngsters went to his lap as quickly and as joyously as to a garden swing.

He loved the poor out-at waifs of the street with the same tenderness bestowed upon the children of his friends and neighbors, and it is said of him that on his wedding day he kept his bride waiting at the church, while he, on his knees in the mud of the street, settled a dispute among a quartette of ragamuffins over a game of marbles.

While his songs of childhood remain

a monument to his memory, other lines which fell occasionally from his facile pen add no small measure to the gentle sweetness that marked the kindly man. His letters to his own children are genuine, honest, and human. They breathe a soft fragrance and a beauty—a something greater and broader and deeper than the tender words of a father; between the lines one can feel the throb of a mother's heart.

In his work as a poet of childhood, there is always manifest that rare and subtle, sympathetic power to touch the heart and to moisten the eye—that wondrous simple touch that first makes the reader think, and then to quiver,

and finally to aspirate a sweet, delicious sigh. And there lies the secret of his power as a poet of childhood. His verses have a sympathy, a warmth, and a genuineness that cannot fail to open up the secret springs of memory and make us live again the joyous days of our happy youth. True children, as fresh and pure as the flowers of the hillside, caper and romp and coo and pray throughout his verse.

Only a master hand, influenced by a great soul, could have written those two particular touches of child life, "Little Boy Blue" and "Wynken, Blynken, and Nod." The former in its gentle realism tells of

"The touch of a little hand
And the smile of a little face!"

while the latter, riotous in romanticism, takes the children

"Sailing off in a wooden shoe!"

It will be many years before our memories become dulled to the delights of "The Sugar-Plum Tree", which flourished in Shut-Eye Town, or to the fascinating charms of "The Naughty Doll", whose fond mistress loved to

"Dress her up and curl her hair
And feed her taffy candy!"

Our hard, indifferent, mercenary hearts, calloused by a false and too

rapid civilization, must ache afresh at "Pitty-pat and Tippy-toe" as we recall with flooded eyes those sweet days long ago, when we, too, found many a childish hurt to soothe and

"Many a little bump to kiss!"

And in ages yet to come, a million mothers, some worn and tired, grown old before their time, will linger tearfully and hug closely to their trembling hearts

"A little sock of faded hue,
A little lock of golden hair"

and kiss the printed page containing "Christmas Treasures"; for next to God's eternal Love comes mother love

and father love, and he who loves the children cannot hate his God; and he who writes immortal words of children and of love is near to that Almighty Throb which makes the world go 'round.

Good-night, Eugene, but not farewell;
Although Life's sun for thee hath set,
In hearts of millions long will dwell
Thy kindly light. We'll not forget
The tender, gentle touch—the charm,
The grace and pathos of thy pen;
Good-night, sweet soul of Sabine farm,
Belov'd of children and of men.

WILL M. CLEMENS.

NEW YORK, 1901.

THE STARS:
A SLUMBER STORY

THE STARS: *A Slumber Story*

A VERY wondrous thing happened the other night; I will tell you about it. Dady is a little boy who is hardly more than three years old. Every night when his mamma puts him to bed, she sits beside him and sings to him till he is fast asleep. The other night Dady's mamma had tucked him up nice and snug in his bed, and had heard him repeat his little prayer, when Dady said: "What will you sing about to-night, mamma?"

"What would you like to have me sing about?" asked mamma.

"Sing about the bears and lions," said Dady.

Mamma laughed heartily. "Why

Dady," said she, "what do I know about bears and lions? No, I will sing a little hushaby about the stars. When I was a little girl my mamma used to sing it to me. Would you like to hear it?"

"Yes," said Dady.

"Then you must shut your eyes and be very still," said mamma.

So Dady closed his eyes, and was very quiet while his mamma sang this little lullaby:

Cradle Song

The twinkling stars, that stud the skies
  Throughout the quiet night,
Are only precious little eyes
  Of babies fair and bright;

For, when the babies are asleep,
An angel comes and takes
Their little eyes to guard and keep
Until the morning breaks.
So, in the sky and on the earth,
Those little eyes divine,
With quiet love and twinkling mirth,
Through all the darkness shine.
The golden and majestic moon
Beholds these baby eyes,
And, mother-like, she loves to croon
Her softest lullabies,
Her gentlest hushabies.

The tiny flow'rs the baby knew
Throughout the noisy day,
Now ope their blossoms to the dew
And, smiling, seem to say:
"We know you, stars, serene and small,
Up yonder in the skies—
You are no little stars at all—
You're only baby eyes!"

The lambkins scamper to and fro
And chase the night away.
For they are full of joy to know
The stars behold their play.
The wind goes dancing, free and light,
O'er tree and hilltop high.
And murmurs all the happy night
The sweetest lullaby,
The gentlest hushaby.

So let thy little eyelids close
Like flow'rs at set of sun.
And tranquil be thy soul's repose,
My precious weary one!
The still and melancholy night
Is envious of thine eyes,
And longs to see their glorious light
In yonder azure skies.
The daisies wonder all the while
Why all is dark above,
And clamor for the radiant smile
Of little orbs they love;

And, lo! an angel hovers near
To bear thine eyes on high.
So sleep, my babe, if thou would'st hear
The music of the sky—
Sweet nature's hushaby.

Scarcely had Dady's mamma finished this song when the wondrous thing of which we spoke a few moments ago happened. Dady opened his eyes to see the lambkins playing in the meadows, when, lo! at his side, where his mamma had been sitting but a moment before, there stood a beautiful angel, with the whitest wings and the sweetest smile Dady ever saw. Dady was not frightened the least bit.

"Shut your eyes, little Dady," said

the Angel, "for I want to put them up in the sky for stars."

"Oh, but it will hurt," said Dady.

"No, it will not hurt," said the angel, and Dady believed the angel, because angels always tell the truth.

Then Dady closed his eyes, and, will you believe it? the angel put his hands on Dady's eyes and took them right out of Dady's head, and it never hurt Dady at all. No, it felt rather nice than otherwise, for Dady's body at once fell into a sound sleep, while Dady's eyes became wider awake than ever before, and could see very plainly the smallest things in the world. Out of the window, away over the housetops,

and up into the sky flew the angel with Dady's eyes, and Dady was not frightened, because the angel was very kind and gentle.

"Will he really put us in the sky?" thought the eyes. "It certainly will seem very new and strange to look down on the world from away up there."

But before Dady's eyes knew what was being done with them, they were put fast in the blue sky, right between two pairs of eyes Dady thought he had seen before.

"Whose eyes are you?" asked Dady.

"Why, we are Susie's eyes," said the little brown stars.

"And whose eyes are you?" asked

Dady, turning to the little sparklers on the other side.

"We are Trotty's eyes," replied the little blue eyes.

"Then I am not frightened," said Dady.

"Oh, no," said the Susie eyes, "there is nothing to be afraid of up here in the soft, kindly sky. It is really very charming."

"Don't you see how cool and pleasant it is?" asked the Trotty eyes. "Really this is much nicer than the close, heated air down near the earth."

So they talked. And there were thousands and thousands of other little eyes doing service as stars all around

them. There were blue eyes and black eyes, and brown eyes and hazel eyes, and among others there was a pair of beautiful little golden eyes which Dady fell quite in love with. They were Louisa's eyes, and they were very sweet, for Louisa herself was a very good little girl.

"What is that music we hear?" asked the Louisa eyes.

Dady listened, and surely enough he heard the most beautiful music sweeping along through the air beneath.

"I wonder what it can be?" queried the Trotty eyes. "We never heard such sweet sounds before."

"Oh, that is the song of the night

wind," said a pair of older eyes that had been stars many times. "Let us listen and hear what the song is about."

So the eyes all kept very quiet and listened to the night wind as it sang this song:

The Rose and the Iceberg

I hasten from the land of snows,
  Where sunbeams dance and quiver,
Unto the dwelling of a rose,
  Hard by a southern river.
An iceberg loves the blooming thing,
  But she will pay no heeding
Unto the splendid polar king,
  Nor to his piteous pleading.

Abashed that she is hostile to
  His amorous pursuing,
The iceberg wills that I should go
  To do his kingly wooing.

He bids me lure her from her tree,
And from her balmy places;
And bear her swiftly back with me
Unto his fond embraces.

So, swiftly o'er the mountains high,
And through the forests gloomy,
Unto the distant vale I fly
To win this blossom to me.
To-morrow evening shall I ride—
More merrisome and faster—
For I shall bear the blooming bride
Back to my kingly master.

"What is it all about?" asked the Dady eyes.

"I'm sure I don't know," said the Louisa eyes.

"It is about a great, cold iceberg that loves a rose," explained the Trotty eyes; "but the rose does not love the iceberg,

so the night wind is going to steal the rose and take her to the iceberg's palace."

The Dady eyes did not seem to understand all this sentiment, and were going to make further inquiries, when the Susie eyes asked, "Can you see the big city away down yonder?"

"Oh, yes," said the Trotty eyes, "and we can see the house where we live during the day."

"And can we see our mamma?" asked the Dady eyes.

"Certainly," replied the Trotty eyes. "Look hard, and you will see her fast asleep in bed. See, she is smiling."

"I can see her," said an ugly old

spook that came buzzing through the air; "and I know why she is smiling. Listen:

There's a joyous smile on her features, while
  The moon through the lattice streams,
And fancies roll through her somnolent soul
  And sweet are her fevered dreams—
    The dreams
  With which her slumber teems.

There are tomes of guile in her tranquil smile
  That basks in the moon's caress—
She dreams of a gown that's the talk of the
    town—
  That's easy enough to guess—
    Oh, yes,
  She dreams of a new silk dress!"

"For shame!" cried the star eyes. "As if a mother ever could dream of

such things! No; when a mother smiles in her sleep, she dreams of her little one."

And for his abominable heresy, the ugly old spook was condemned to marry an owl and live in the hollow of a dead tree.

"Baa—baa," bleated a little lamb in the meadow. It had lost its way among the high grass and flowers, and was bleating for its mother.

"Poor little lamb—it has lost its way," said the Louisa eyes.

"Can we not help it?" said the Susie eyes. "Suppose we all shine as hard as ever we can, and then maybe it will see its way to its mamma."

So all the little star eyes shone with all their might, and, startled by the sudden light, the mother sheep sprang from her slumbers and called to her little one. Then the little lamb heard her voice and hastened to her side. It made the star eyes very happy to know they had done the little lamb such a kindly service. Then all the flock on the meadow got together, and the wise old mother sheep gathered around in a circle and watched the little lambs at play in the midst of the circle. It was a lively sight. On the meadow grew a daisy which the lambs loved very dearly because it was beautiful and gentle. Now, it happened that this

daisy stood right in the centre of the circle where the lambs played that night.

"Oh, come," said one little lamb, whose name was Kinky, "come, let us have some fun with the daisy. Let us see if we can leap over its head."

"For mercy's sake," cried the daisy, "do not strike me with your feet or you will crush me!"

"Have no fears," said Kinky, "for we love you too much to harm you."

Then the fun began. Kinky led the race, and leaped over the daisy, and all the rest of the lambs followed in one, two, three fashion, and so the sport continued until the little lambs were

all worn out with play, and the mother sheep were nearly dead with laughter. And the daisy cried: "Now, really, you must rest awhile, and as for me, I must open my little mouths and take good, long drinks of cool dew, for I am very thirsty."

"Yes," said an old grandma sheep, "you little lambs should go to bed. Lie down on the green grass close to your mothers while I sing you to sleep."

They were very obedient little lambs. They cuddled up to their big, warm mothers, and fell asleep to the song of the old grandma sheep, which song was something like this:

A Hushaby

Ba-ba, baby sheep,
Chill and sombre grows the night—
Only stars from heaven's height
Shed on us their golden light—
Ba-ba, go to sleep—
Go to sleep, baby sheep!

Ba-ba, baby sheep—
Never mind the goblin's growl—
Never heed the hoodoo's howl—
Let the hippogriffin prowl—
Ba-ba, mother'll keep
Watch over baby sheep!

Ba-ba, baby sheep—
Up above, serene and far,
Beams a tiny golden star
Listening to the ba-ba
I am singing to the sheep,
As they rock the lambs to sleep.

"We can understand that song," said the Dady eyes, "and we like it very much. On the whole, we think it is very pleasant up here in the sky."

"Yes," said the Louisa eyes, "it is much better to be shining upon the world up here than to be slumbering in our quiet cribs at home."

Then a pair of the older eyes explained that if the children were good all day on earth, their eyes would surely be set in the sky for stars. Dady's eyes and Louisa's and Trotty's and all the rest at once made a solemn determination that they always would be good.

About this time the star eyes saw a

number of fleecy objects sailing along through the sky in their direction.

"They must be swans," said the Susie eyes.

"Oh, what lovely creatures!" shouted the star eyes in chorus.

But no, they were simply clouds; but they sailed along like majestic birds of passage.

"Where are you going?" demanded the Trotty eyes.

"Would you like to hear our song?" inquired the clouds.

"Indeed, we would," answered the star eyes in one voice.

"Then listen," said the clouds; "we cannot stay long, for we are in great

haste, as you will hear from our song."

The star eyes paid close attention, and the clouds, as they decreased their speed, joined in this pretty little song:

Song of the Clouds

Far, far beyond yon Eastern steeps
  There is an humble little cot,
  And in that homely, lonely spot
A mother prays and weeps.
Be calm, dear one, the Father hears
  Thy softest plaint and faintest sigh,
  And He hath bless'd thy pray'rful cry
And sanctified thy tears.

And He hath sent us clouds to bear
  Thy mother's tears, in form of rain,
  Unto the distant desert plain,
To cool the desert air.

The fainting youth will feel our breath
  Upon his bronzed and fevered face,
  And have new strength to leave that
    place—
That arid haunt of death.

The mother heart need not despair—
  To-morrow eve the son shall rest
  Upon that mother's joyful breast,
For God hath heard her pray'r.
So, gentle stars, stay not our flight—
  A mother's tears, in form of rain,
  We bear unto that distant plain
Where faints a son to-night.

The star eyes were much pleased with this song, and they would have asked the clouds to sing all the night, but that would have been very wrong.

"No, we must not detain them, for they are sailing on an errand of kind-

ness and mercy," said a pair of the older of the star eyes.

Then the clouds flew swiftly on their journey, in search of the weeping mother's wandering son, singing as they went, and accompanied through all their journey by the tenderest wishes of the little star eyes.

"Speed on, speed on, O dear clouds," cried the star eyes, "and bear strength to the distant traveller son that he may come to the mother ere her heart break."

As you may easily imagine, the night was now pretty well along. The moon came up in the eastern horizon, looking very red and fretful at first, but as soon as she saw the star eyes waiting

for her, she became as smiling and complacent as you please. Then the Dady eyes saw that the moon was not, as many foolish children believe, a huge green cheese, but a huge ball of fire—not the kind of fire that burns, but a soft and luminous and perfectly harmless fire into which a child might thrust his hand without being singed.

"Aha," quoth the moon, cheerily, "you are all here, my pretty friends!"

"Welcome, dear moon," cried the star eyes; "but why are you so late to-night?"

"Oh, but I have had a dreadful time," said the moon. "I have been all the way to China since I left you last night,

and I have seen the most terrible sight —ough!"

And the moon shivered so mightily that she came very near shaking all the little star eyes out of their places.

"What was this terrible sight?" asked the star eyes, opening themselves to their widest capacity in an excitement of expectancy.

"It was the 'Fate of the Princess Ming,' as I call it," replied the moon, "for I have arranged the story in a song, which I will sing you if you wish."

"Oh, do sing it!" cried the star eyes in unison, "for we are very anxious to hear it."

Then the moon hemmed and hawed

and cleared her throat and sang in very dulcet tones this sad, sad ballad:

The Princess Ming

There was a prince by the name of Tsing
  Who lived in the Chinese town of Lung
And fell in love with the Princess Ming
  Who lived in the neighboring town of Jung;
    'Twas a terrible thing
    For Tsing and Ming,
As you'll allow, when you've heard me sing.

Now it happened so that the town of Lung,
  Where lived the prince who longed to woo,
Went out to war with the town of Jung
  With junks and swords and matchlocks, too—
    'Twas a terrible thing
    For Tsing and Ming,
As you'll allow, when you've heard me sing.

THE STARS: *A Slumber Story*

Miss Ming's papa was eating rice
  On yestermorn at half-past eight,
And had carved a pie composed of mice,
  When the soldiers knocked at his palace
    gate;
      They were led by Tsing,
      And they called for Ming,
Which all will allow was a terrible thing!

Miss Ming's papa girt on his sword—
  "For this," quoth he, "I'll have his gore!"
In vain the Princess Ming implored—
  In vained she swooned on the palace floor—
      The Princess Ming
      Who was wooed of Tsing
Could not prevail with the gruff old King!

The old King opened the palace gate
  And in marched Tsing with his soldiers
    grim,
And the King smote Tsing on his princely
    pate—
  Stating this stern rebuke to him:

"It's a fatal thing
For you, Mr. Tsing,
To come a-courting the Princess Ming!"

The prince most keenly felt this slight,
But still more keenly the cut on his head;
So, suddenly turning cold and white,
He fell to the earth and lay there dead.
Which act of the King
To the handsome Tsing
Was a brutal shock to the Princess Ming.

No sooner did the young prince die
Than Princess Ming from the palace flew,
And jumped straight into the River Ji,
With the dreadful purpose of dying, too!
'Twas a natural thing
For the Princess Ming
To do for love of the handsome Tsing!

THE STARS: *A Slumber Story*

And when she leaped in the River Ji,
  And gasped and choked till her face was blue,
A crocodile fish came paddling by
  And greedily bit Miss Ming in two—
    The horrid old thing
    Devoured Miss Ming,
Who had hoped to die for the love of Tsing.

When the King observed her life adjourned,
  By the crocodile's biting the girl in twain,
Up to the ether his toes he turned,
  With a ghastly rent in his jugular vein;
    So the poor old King,
    And Tsing, and Ming
Were dead and gone—what a terrible thing!

And as for the crocodile fish that had
  Devoured Miss Ming in this off-hand way,
He caught the dyspepsy so dreadful bad
  That he, too, died that very day!
    So, now, with the King,
    And Tsing, and Ming,
And the crocodile dead, what more can I sing?

"What a dreadful song!" said the Dady eyes. "I never heard anything half so terrible!"

"Poor princess," sighed the Trotty eyes, "how she must have loved the prince!"

"I became so much interested in the affair," explained the moon, "that I overstayed my time in China by half an hour and that is why I am tardy to-night."

"Can we go to China some time?" asked the Dady eyes. "We want to see the crocodile bite a princess in two!"

At this dreadful suggestion the other star eyes shuddered and the moon frowned severely.

"How can you want to see such a dreadful sight?" asked the moon, reproachfully. "No, you cannot go to China—at least not while you are Baby eyes. For what would the sky do without you all the dark night, and how dreary the earth would be without your kindly smiles and cheering rays?"

The Dady eyes concluded that the moon was right, although they were unwilling to concede that it would not be an interesting experience to see a crocodile bite a beautiful princess in two.

"Now, little star eyes," said the moon, "if you all will be very quiet I will call to the elves to come out and dance upon the meadow."

"Oh, what are elves?" eagerly inquired the Dady eyes.

"They are the tiniest little creatures in the world," said the moon; "they are little men and women who live in the flowers and under the bark of the trees."

"Pray do call out the elves!" shouted the star eyes.

The moon accordingly pitched her voice in a tuneful key and sang this invocation:

An Elfin Summons

From the flow'rs and from the trees
  Come, O tiny midnight elves,
And, to music of the breeze,
  Merrily disport yourselves.

THE STARS: *A Slumber Story*

Harnessing the glow-worm's wing,
  Drive the glow-worm for your steed,
Or with crickets dance and sing
  On the velvet, perfumed mead.
Forth from pretty blue-bells creep
  To coquette with starlight gleam—
See, the lambkins are asleep
  And the daisies sleeping dream.
Hasten to engage yourselves
In your frolics, midnight elves!

See, a toad with jewelled eyes
  Comes and croaks his homely song
To the spider as she plies
  Her deft spinning all night long;
See the bat with rustling wings
  Darting nervously above—
Hear the cricket as she sings
  To her little violet love.
All the goblins are asleep
  And no flimflam hovers near,

So from out the posies creep
With your Elfin ladies dear;
Merrily disport yourselves,
Frisky little midnight elves!

Hardly had the moon finished this curious song when the meadow was peopled with myriads of the tiniest little ladies and gentlemen the star eyes ever had seen. Each of these people was no larger than the smallest cambric needle, yet all were so symmetrically proportioned that they were to all intents human beings.

"If you were not star eyes you would not see them at all," explained the moon.

Most of the elves came from the

blossoms of flowers, some crept from out the tufts of grass, while others emerged from the loose bark of the trees, and others still leaped down from the chinks and crevices of the stone wall that surrounded the meadow. They gamboled gleefully over the wet and shining grass, and played every variety of prank known to merry little people. The attentive star eyes could see that these curious people were exceedingly pretty to look upon, that their raiment was of the most elegant material, and that they were the very personification of nimbleness and grace. Their king appeared to be one whom they called Piccolo. He was a beauti-

ful little creature, with the merriest and tiniest blue eyes, the silkiest golden hair, and the most musical voice imaginable. He wore a robe woven by six silver spiders; this robe was lined with down from the skin of a maiden peach, and it was fastened with buttons of pearl no larger than gnats' eyes. Piccolo's hat was a violet leaf, and his shoes were manufactured of the pelt of a baby dormouse. He was a very dainty little object.

"Let us awaken the lambkins," cried Piccolo, as he nimbly climbed a daisy stalk and dexterously swung himself upon the back of the little lamb that was named Kinky.

His blithesome little subjects followed his example.

"Ba-a-a," moaned Kinky, in his sleep, for he dreamed he was beset by ugly gnomes, who were shearing his fleece.

"Wake up, little Kinky!" shouted Piccolo in Kinky's ear.

Kinky leaped to his feet, vastly bewildered.

"Ba-a-a!" cried Kinky. "What is all this hubbub?"

"It is I, Piccolo," said Piccolo, in assuring tones. "We have come to play with you by moonlight."

"Yes, wake up, Kinky," chimed in the daisy, "and let me see how fast

you can run with all those little elves on your back."

Kinky took very kindly to the idea. So he got his companions together, and proposed that they have a race to the brook at the lower end of the meadow and back again. Each lambkin was to carry three hundred elves on his back, and the lamb that ran first to the brook and first home again was to have a prize of three white clover blossoms.

Well, it was great sport. Piccolo, his court, and more than two hundred of his faithful subjects rode Kinky, and the other lambs carried their burdens quite as willingly. The daisy was the

time-keeper, and when she said the word, away frisked the lambkins amid the laughter of the elves, who clung very tight to the fleece of their flying steeds. Gracious! how fast those lambkins did run—it almost took the breath away from the elves. Over moss and violet and grass they sped, over clover bloom and trailing vine and ripening berry. "Ba-a-a," cried the lambkins in chorus, while the elves screamed excitedly, and held on tighter than ever. The brook heard them coming.

"Mercy on us!—what can be the matter?" wondered the brook, but the next moment the lambkins and elves were at the bank, and the brook saw

that it was his little friends who were making all this clatter.

"Stay awhile and hear my song," said the brook.

"Shall we?" inquired the lambkins of each other.

"Yes, let us stay and hear it," quoth the elves.

So the lambkins tarried to hear the song of the brook, which was somewhat as follows:

A Brook Song

I'm hastening from the distant hills
With swift and noisy flowing,
Nursed by a thousand tiny rills,
I'm ever onward going.
The willows cannot stay my course,
With all their pliant wooing·

THE STARS · *A Slumber Story*

I sing and sing till I am hoarse,
  My prattling way pursuing.
I kiss the pebbles as I pass,
  And hear them say they love me;
I make obeisance to the grass
  That kindly bends above me.
So onward through the meads and dells
  I hasten, never knowing
The secret motive that impels,
  Or whither I am going.

A little child comes often here
  To watch my quaint commotion,
As I go tumbling, swift and clear,
  Down to the distant ocean;
And as he plays upon my brink,
  So thoughtless like and merry,
And full of noisy song, I think
  The child is like me, very.
Through all the years of youthful play,
  With ne'er a thought of sorrow,
We, prattling, speed upon our way,

Unmindful of the morrow;
Aye, through these sunny meads and dells
We gambol, never trowing
The solemn motive that impels,
Or whither we are going.

And men come here to say to me:
"Like you, with weird commotion,
O little singing brooklet, we
Are hastening to an ocean;
Down to a vast and misty deep,
With fleeting tears and laughter,
We go, nor rest until we sleep
In that profound Hereafter.
What tides may bear our souls along—
What monsters rise appalling—
What distant shores may hear our song
And answer to our calling?
Ah, who can say! through meads and dells
We wander, never knowing
The awful motive that impels,
Or whither we are going!"

"Fie, fie!" cried the moon reproachfully; "what a sorry song to sing the little folks when they want to be merry."

"Yes, indeed," sighed Kinky; "it made me feel very sad."

"And I," quoth Piccolo, "had already begun to weep."

"It is quite right that little folks should be blithesome and gay," continued the moon, frowning upon the brook, "but this mournful melody has cast a cloud over us all."

"Speaking of mournful things," said a toadstool which grew by the brook, "reminds me of the ballad of 'The Bingo Bird and the Doodledoo.' I am an indifferent vocalist, but if you would

like to hear this strange narrative, I will give it you gladly."

The lambkins and elves said they would be glad to hear the song if it were not too melancholic, and forthwith the toadstool, having borrowed the cricket's tuning-fork, pitched his voice in the proper key and sang as follows:

The Dismal Dole of the Doodledoo

A bingo bird once nestled her nest
  On the lissom bough of an I O yew,
Hard by a burrow that was possess'd
  Of a drear and dismal doodledoo.
Eftsoons this doodledoo descried
  The blithe and beautiful bingo bird,

THE STARS: *A Slumber Story*

He vowed he'd woo her to be his bride
With many a sleek and winsome word.
"Oh, doo! oh, doo!" sang the doodledoo
To the bingo bird in the yarrish yew.

Now a churlish chit was the bingo bird,
Though her plumes were plumes of cardinal hue,
And she smithered a smirk whenever she heard
The tedious yawp of the doodledoo;
For she loved, alas! a subtile snaix,
Which had a sting at the end of his tail
And lived in a tarn of sedge and brakes
On the murky brink of a gruesome swail.
"Oh, doo! oh, doo!" moaned the doodledoo,
As dimmer and danker each day he grew.

Now, when this doodledoo beheld
The snaix go wooing the bingo bird,
With envious rancor his bosom swelled—
His soul with bitter remorse was stirred.

And a flubdub said to the doodledoo,
" The subtile snaix isn't toting square—
I tell no tales—but if I were you,
I'd stop his courting the bingo fair!
Aye, marry, come up, I'd fain imbrue,
If I were only a doodledoo!"

These burning words which the flubdub said
Inflamed the reptile's tortured soul
Till the bristles rose on his livid head,
And his slimy tongue began for to roll;
His skin turned red and his fangs turned black
And his eyes exuded a pool of tears,
And the scales stood up on his bony back,
And fire oozed out of his nose and ears!
Oh, he was a terrible sight to view—
This fierce and vengeful doodledoo!

The very next morn, as the bingo bird
Was nursing her baby bingoes three,
She gave a start, for she plainly heard
An ominous sound at the foot of the tree!

Her keen eye lit on the gruesome brakes,
From whence proceeded the hullaballoo—
And, lo and behold! 'twas the subtile snaix,
Busy at work with the doodledoo.
Boo-hoo! boo-hoo! how the feathers flew,
When the snaix imbrued with the doodledoo!

They fought and scratched, and they bit and bled,
Dispensing gore and their vitals, too,
And never pausing till both were dead—
The subtile snaix and the doodledoo!
And the bingo bird—she didn't mind,
But giving her shoulders a careless shrug,
She went the way of her female kind,
And straightway wedded the straddlebug!
And there was nobody left to rue
The doom of the snaix and the doodledoo—
Unless, mayhap, 'twas the I O yew.

"What silly verses!" exclaimed the Trotty star eyes.

"They do very well for a toadstool," quoth the moon; "and they repeat a very common experience, too. But perhaps you are too young yet to understand the philosophy of even the toadstool muse."

"I know a little love story," said the violet; "please let me tell it to you."

The Violet's Love Story

Here died a robin in the spring,
  And, when he fluttered down to me,
I tried to bind his broken wing,
  And soothe his dying agony.

I loved the wounded little bird—
  And, though my heart was full to break,
I loved in silence—ne'er a word
  Of that dear, hopeless love I spake.

I saw his old companions bring
  Their funeral tributes to this dell;
But, when they went, I stayed to sing
  The love I had not dared to tell.

So, while the little robin sleeps,
  The sorrowing violet bides above:
And still she sings, as still she weeps,
  A requiem to her buried love.

"Come, come!" cried the lamb Kinky; "it is time for us to start back. Remember, the first of us home is to be rewarded with three white clover blossoms!"

Piccolo and the other elves secured a very tight hold on the fleece of their lambkins and said they were ready. Then the solemn old toadstool gave

the word, and away the fleet-footed racers whisked. It was a more exciting run than before. Lickety-split, helter-skelter flew the lambkins, and the night winds had hard work keeping up. Kinky, with Piccolo and the elfin court on his back, was some distance ahead of the others, and seemed sure of winning the race.

"Hurry, hurry, hurry!" cried the Dady eyes, and Kinky seemed to be encouraged by the words, for he gave a tremendous bound forward, and—

Dady was wide awake!

"Why, I must have been dreaming!" said Dady.

It was broad daylight, and mamma

came in to dress him. He told her all about his dream.

"But it may not have been a dream," said Dady's mamma; "you know the old song says the stars are only good little children's eyes. Suppose you be a very good little child to-day, and see if the angel doesn't come again to-night and put your eyes away up in the sky for two bright, pretty stars."

EUGENE FIELD:
A SKETCH

EUGENE FIELD:
A Sketch

BORN, SEPTEMBER 2, 1850
DIED, NOVEMBER 4, 1895

EUGENE FIELD, journalist, humorist, and poet, was the second and oldest surviving son of Roswell Martin Field and Frances Reed Field, both natives of Windham County, Vermont. The elder Field was a distinguished lawyer in St. Louis, and an accomplished scholar. He was perhaps best known as one of the counsel for Dred Scott in the famous slavery case.

While he was yet a little child of six years, Eugene's mother died and he was

placed, with his younger brother, in the care of his aunt, Miss Mary French, of Amherst, Mass. He was fitted for college by the Rev. James Tufts, and at seventeen years of age he entered Williams College. Upon the death of his father in 1869, Prof. John W. Burgess, who was appointed the boy's guardian, placed him in Knox College, at Galesburg, Ill. He studied there two years, and afterward remained for some time at the University of Missouri.

Francis Wilson, a life-long friend of Field, says of the father and mother of the poet: "He, very unfortunately, had but a fleeting, faint memory of his mother. She passed to the great be-

yond when he was but a child of a few years, but he drew a noble inspiration from his father, who was all in all to him through boyhood, youth, and young manhood. Strange as it may seem, he never wrote a line in prose or ballad dedicated to that father, but he loved and revered him none the less."

Eugene Field's first attempt at authorship was in an amateur way for newspapers in 1871, when he was twenty-one and a sophomore at Knox College, Galesburg, Ill. This early work was his preparation for the tasks of his later life.

Dr. Henry Tyler assisted in Field's education at Knox College. "He made life a burden for me," Dr. Tyler once

remarked; "but never in a way that could be reproved. It was simply impossible to inspire him with an idea of subservient respectfulness to others. Gaily carolling up the college walk, ten minutes late for his recitation, he would see me in my chair near the window and cry, 'Ah, good-morning, doctor! I'm a little late. Shall I jump in through the window?' and without waiting for permission he usually made his entrance that way, while the other pupils trembled in expectation of the reprimand which I had not the heart to give."

While a student at the University of Missouri, Field met a young man named

Comstock. They became "chums" and decided to travel together for a year in Europe. Before the journey was begun, young Field accepted an invitation to make a few weeks' visit at the Comstock home in St. Joseph. His friend had five sisters of such surpassing fairness that they were known and are remembered as "the pretty Comstock girls."

The second of these young ladies, Julia Sutherland Comstock, was then only 16 years of age, but Eugene fell in love with her at once, and during his brief sojourn in St. Joseph he promptly proposed and was accepted. Before the two had reached the Atlantic coast

young Comstock missed his travelling companion. Investigation showed that Field had returned to St. Joseph to bid his sweetheart another and a longer farewell.

His six months' tour of Europe was one long holiday.

"I had a lovely time," he said once, in telling his experience to a friend. "I just swatted the money around. Just think of it, a boy of 21, without father or mother, and with $60,000. It was a lovely experience. I saw more things and did more things than are dreamed of in your philosophy, Horatio. I had money. I paid it out for experience—it was plenty. Experience was lying around loose."

Field stayed abroad until the $60,000 was spent. Then he came home, married Miss Comstock, and began his career as a journalist, on the staff of the St. Louis *Journal*. He achieved his first prominent triumph as news writer while a correspondent at Jefferson City during the session of the Legislature. These letters were characterized by a faithful account of legislative proceedings, graphic description, brilliant criticism, and incisive sarcasm. This field afforded him unbounded opportunities for the exercise of his peculiar genius.

From St. Louis he went to St. Joseph, where for a period of eighteen months

he was Associate Editor of the *Gazette*. Then he returned to St. Louis as a writer of editorial paragraphs for the *Journal*. This was the beginning of his work in the line which he used to call "my own." He wrote his first verse for the *Journal*.

Then he went to the Kansas City *Times* as managing editor, and there he wrote the "Little Peach," which was set to music and sung all over the country. In 1881 he went to the Denver *Tribune*, where he remained until he joined the Chicago *News* staff in 1883. He went to *The News* under contract to write what he pleased, but he was to furnish a column a day of it. His col-

umn, "Sharps and Flats," was widely known, and was continued until within a few days of his death.

His capacity for work was prodigious. A pen capable of making only the finest hair-strokes, when once set to travelling over a pad of paper, produced within two hours enough of his beautiful microscopic writing to fill a long newspaper column of agate type. Usually the sheets went to the printers without a blot or erasure. Yet, Field's best productions were by no means hastily done, A poem or a story developed in his mind for days and sometimes for weeks or months before a word of it was written.

His wit and sarcasm in that famous

editorial column of "Sharps and Flats" attracted world-wide attention. He had repeated offers from Eastern newspapers and magazines. One great New York daily offered him his own price to join its editorial staff. Always, at least twice a year, these tempting offers were made to him, but he steadily refused them. He was in his element in the West, he used to say, and he meant to stay there. There was no element in the East, only an atmosphere. He was essentially a Western man. His sympathies were with the Western ways of life and his likings were for them. He was fearful of himself in the East. So whatever the attraction and inducements offered, he

invariably refused to give up his Western freedom.

While Field's clever newspaper feuilletons made him celebrated throughout the journalistic world, he was not known to the general reading public until the appearance of his two books, "A Little Book of Western Verse" and "A Little Book of Profitable Tales."

Ill health compelled him to again visit Europe in 1889, and for more than a year he travelled on the Continent. While abroad he saw much of literary London, and received at its hands many kind attentions. There he renewed acquaintanceship with his talented classmate of Williams College, Isaac Hen-

derson, the novelist. In London also he rummaged during many weeks for old books, old theatrical programmes, and curios of all sorts, finally departing heavily laden with spoil. Prominent among his foreign treasures was the well-worn axe of Mr. Gladstone, who presented it to him and received thanks in the shape of an epigram.

While in England, he paid a visit to the grave of John Wesley, and tells this anecdote of his experiences there: "As you leave the spot you are swooped down upon by a hawk-nosed female who inveigles you into a sort of lodge and worries you until you pay her two shillings for a series of twenty-four

pictures purporting to illustrate the life of Wesley.

"'You'll come down to-morrow and attend service, won't you?' asked this old griffin.

"'Inasmuch as I live about five miles due west of here,' said I, 'it is likely that if I attend service at all I shall attend service where a cab fare of two and six is not involved.'

"'But aren't you a Noncomformist divine?' she asked.

"'Madam,' said I seriously, 'I have been mistaken at different times for Sol Smith Russell, Nat Goodwin, Harry Dixey, and Bill Nye, but never yet have I been told that I looked like a preacher.

No, my good sister in Adam, I am not a clergyman—I am by predestination, preordination, prepossession, predilection, and profession, an ungodly newspaper man.'

"'Lor' me!' she exclaimed, and a shade of disappointment crept into her voice; 'thinkin' you was a divine I knocked off sixpence on them pictures!'"

Being a genius, Field possessed the inevitable touch of eccentricity which showed itself most prominently in his love for old and rare books. Many of the volumes he purchased had no possible bearing upon his work, and indeed had small intrinsic value. "My library," he used to say, "is full of fool books,"

and there was some truth in this. For example, he had hundreds of volumes containing the works of unknown and for the most part unworthy poets. Nothing pleased him more than to buy some little volume of execrable verse, produced by a local poet in Battle Creek, or any other insignificant place, and these he would range proudly with the others and sometimes turn over the pages "just to see how bad they were." He said that things had to be either very good or very bad in order to please him.

He was essentially a bibliophrydasiac, or, in other words, an inspirer of bibliomania. His most notable proselytes to the noble craze were Francis Wilson,

the comedian, and Harry B. Smith, the librettist. They never collected books until Field introduced them to the seductive pleasures of book-hunting.

Field was a most enthusiastic collector of everything that for any reason might be regarded as worth collecting. Once in New York, some of his friends found him in his room at a Broadway hotel surrounded by old pewter pots and plates, old warming-pans and porringers and everything else that looked as if it might be old. He tried hard to believe that these things came over in the *Mayflower*, and no matter what the prices he paid he thought he had made a bargain. This inability to refuse to buy anything

said to be a curio gave rise to some ridiculous stories about him.

He had a collection of envelopes used during the Civil War, and all the sheet music of the time that once stirred the heart of the nation. He also had a collection of bells, of dolls of all nations, and of mechanical toys.

During the last two years of his eventful life, Field became popular upon the lecture platform as a reader of his own works. The night of his death, November 4, 1895, he had a engagement to read in Kansas City. He passed away at his home in Buena Park, a suburb of Chicago, in the quiet of the night after a slight illness of only a few hours' dura-

tion. They found him in the morning, his hands clasped over his heart, a smile of peace upon his face. Thus went out the light, and the world lost a gentle, kindly man, poet, wit, philosopher, and friend of all humanity.

Eugene Field sleeps the long, eternal sleep in Graceland Cemetery, near Chicago, and his myrtle-covered grave is a shrine for many pilgrims who seek to pay homage to the children's poet.

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